

Madagascar

Polynesian People in an African Island

By Walter D. Marcuse

Author of "Through Western Madagascar"

MADAGASCAR, the great island lying about two hundred and fifty miles off the S.E. coast of Africa, may have been known to the Greeks and Arabians at a very early date, but the name Madagascar was first applied to it by Marco Polo in the thirteenth century. This great traveller, however, never visited the island himself, and there is sufficient internal evidence in his account to show clearly that he was confusing it with some portion of the African mainland.

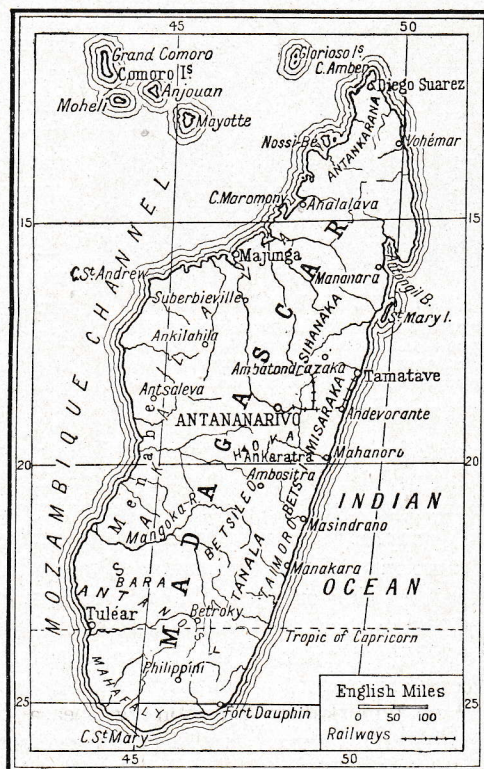
Early in the sixteenth century the Portuguese visited the island, and later formed a settlement, shortly afterwards destroyed by the French, who superseded them. Radama I. was the first native king of the Malagasy, who favoured Europeans and encouraged Christianity, but on his death in 1828 his reactionary queen, Ranavalona, expelled the missionaries. The subsequent history of the island is a record of desultory warfare between the French and the Malagasy, marked by several abortive military expeditions, until the final conquest of the native tribes in 1895 by General Galliéni.

The island is now administered by a French governor-general, with

headquarters at Antananarivo, who delegates his authority to several administrators, each in charge of a separate district; many natives being employed in subordinate positions.

The island is roughly 1,000 miles long by 300 miles broad, and its area about 250,000 square miles. Its central portion consists of a chain of mountains running approximately from Cape St. Andrew to Fort Dauphin, and forming the principal watershed. The eastern slope is much shorter and more abrupt than the western, and discharges numerous rivers through deep forest gorges to the sea. This eastern side of Madagascar is the only portion of the island which receives a copious and general rainfall throughout the year.

The central uplands are from 3,000 to 5,000 feet high, rising here and there to majestic peaks of over 8,000 feet. The general aspect, however, of these elevated regions is monotonous, consisting of vast steppe-like tracts covered with coarse grass and stunted herbage. In this portion of the island there are only two seasons, the hot, rainy season from November to April, and the cool, dry season from May to October. This is the



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HAPPY HEARTS BEAT UNDER BLACK SKINS

Black skins, woolly hair, thick lips and flat noses characterise the Betsimisaraka, a negroid tribe settled on the east coast of Madagascar. They are docile, cheerful people, whose condition has been greatly bettered by the work of Christian missions

Photo, M. Razika

season of rice crops and fruits. The dry season is cool, and light hoar frosts are not unknown, though the region lies within the tropics. This is the pleasantest portion of the year for Europeans, the air being crisp and invigorating, and altogether the climate of the elevated interior cannot be called unhealthy when compared with the fever-stricken plains of the hot western and damp eastern coastal regions. The western plains, though blessed

with a tolerably fertile soil, suffer severely from droughts, the number of rainy days in the year being few, owing to the dry prevailing air currents from the southern Indian Ocean. Successful cultivation can, therefore, only be carried on along the banks of the rivers.

In the extreme south-west rain is rare and the country is an arid, sandy desert, scorched by sun and hot winds during the day, and turning suddenly cold at night.

The forest belt is a marked physical feature of Madagascar, and with numerous breaks practically encircles the island, following the coastline, from which it is never very distant. These forests are most vigorous on the north-east coast, owing to plentiful rains, but the moderate height and growth of the trees everywhere furnish evidence that the soil from which they spring is of no great depth. Yet there are many beautiful and remarkable trees; flowering lianas hang in gay festoons, tree-ferns and fungi form a luxuriant

undergrowth, while the varied colours and shapes of the foliage and lichens are enhanced by the gorgeous hues of beetles and butterflies and the brilliant plumage of many birds.

On the eastern side of the island, casuarinas, raphia palms, tree-ferns, and bamboos abound, and one of the most characteristic trees is the Ravenala or Traveller's Tree. The leaf-sheaths of this forest wonder contain a supply of pure, cool water, hence its name. The

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flora of the western side of the island differs considerably from that of the eastern, although they are in the same latitude. Tamarind trees are plentiful, and there is scarcely a village without one leafy specimen under which the chiefs hold kabary (or palaver) and the villagers gossip. Fan palms are numerous, and at the mouths of the rivers are dense and fetid mangrove swamps which, however, supply a bark that is commercially valuable. All along the west coast are many species of baobab,

the kernels of which yield a rich, oily essence. Ebony, too, is plentiful and much sought after by the Sakalava, for the Hindu trader is willing to advance more money on this wood than on any other.

The fauna of Madagascar is even more remarkable and extraordinary than its flora. None of the large animals on the mainland exists on the island. Apes, lions, zebras, giraffes, elephants, rhinoceroses, and antelopes are wholly wanting. The largest wild animal is the



MALAGASY EQUILIBRISTS MADE PERFECT BY PRACTICE

Malagasy women practise the virtually world-wide custom of carrying their waterpots on their heads, thereby acquiring noticeable erectness of figure. The circular shape of the Malagasy siny, or pot, does not lend itself easily to this method, but practice makes the women so adept that some of them can balance one on their head unsupported by hand, while carrying a child on their back

Photo, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"



SIMPLE EQUIPMENT OF A HAT FACTORY IN IMERINA

Straw-plaiting is a craft in which all the Malagasy tribes have attained a high degree of proficiency. Besides mats and baskets of many shapes and sizes the natives manufacture excellent hats from strips of the leaves of palms, especially the raphia palm, and from various grasses. Some of these are nearly as weather-proof and durable as Panamá hats of good quality

Photo, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

wild boar, frequently hunted by the natives, but the most characteristic denizens of the forest are lemurs and lemur-like creatures, of which there are many species. To the non-scientific observer they appear a mixture between a monkey and a squirrel as they make their way through the forest, skipping and leaping from tree to tree, and uttering shrill, plaintive cries.

Stranger even than the lemurs is the aye-aye, an animal found nowhere else in the world. As it is a nocturnal

creature little is known of its habits in its native haunts, almost all our knowledge of it having been obtained from specimens in captivity. The Malagasy have a superstitious dread of the aye-aye, and believe that anyone who kills one will die within a year.

The largest of the Malagasy carnivora is the fossa (*Cryptoprocta ferox*), which only occurs in Madagascar. This cat-like animal is credited by the natives with a savage disposition, and held in some dread. The rivers harbour innumerable



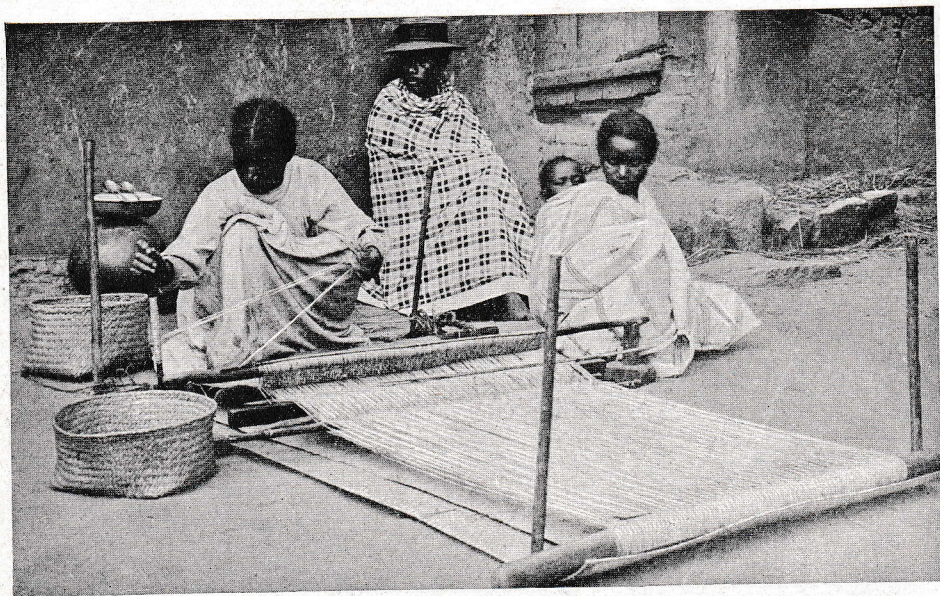
MADAGASCAR'S MOST WIDE-SPREAD VILLAGE INDUSTRY

Mats are the most noticeable article of furniture in Malagasy homes. All over the country material for making them is abundant, and in every village women can be seen plaiting them on the ground outside their houses. The finest and strongest mats are made by the Sihanaka, whose houses have a very clean and neat appearance owing to the number of mats they contain



WEAVING MATS FROM THE PEEL OF FEATHERY SEDGES

From the strong outer peel of the sedge called zozoro excellent floor mats are made, some as much as eight yards long. All Malagasy women can make these mats, and in some tribes deem it a disgrace to buy one. The pith of the plant supplies stuffing for pillows and mattresses, and the triangular stems fitted together are used for doors, window-shutters, and bedsteads. These dusky and industrious workers squat thus for hours patiently keeping to their monotonous task in domestic manufacture



NATIVE CRAFTSMANSHIP CONTENT WITH SIMPLE APPLIANCES

Malagasy native looms are very crude devices, consisting merely of four posts stuck upright in the ground and a framework of two or three pieces of bamboo. On these looms the women weave many kinds of stuff—of hemp, cotton, raphia fibre, and of the strong native silk. Bright and varied colours in stripes and patterns are woven into many of the stuffs

Photo, M. Razaka



WORK THAT COMES EASY TO MALAGASY FINGERS

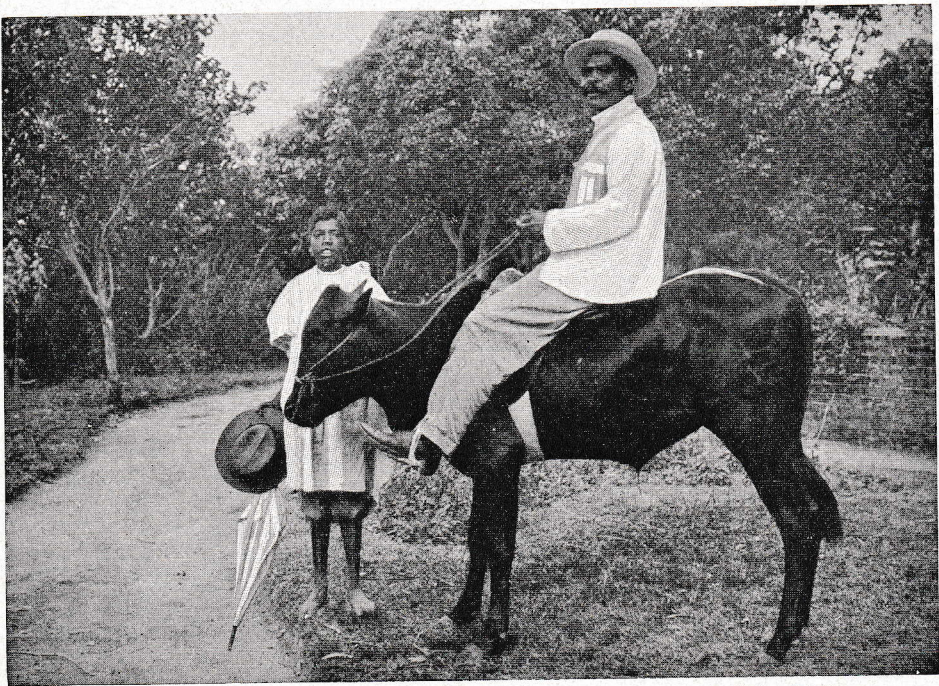
Basket-making is a highly-developed craft throughout Madagascar. The large open panniers in which poultry are brought from the interior to the coast are made of plaited strips of bamboo. Other strong baskets are made of the outer peel of the zozoro sedge, and still finer kinds from a rush called Hazondrano. Many of the specimens are very delicate, and show fine taste in colour and design



BY FILANJANA THROUGH MADAGASCAR'S UPLAND VILLAGES

There is little rural charm about the ordinary Malagasy villages in the forest clearings. The cottages are built of a light framework of wood and bamboo filled in with leaves of pandanus and the traveller's tree. Thatched roofs are universal. Each hut has but one door and window, and a small verandah fails to suggest homely hospitality on the part of the inhabitants of the rather squalid villages

Photo, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"



HIS REVERENCE GOES VISITING ON HIS RIDING-BULLOCK

Born of parents who were at one time slaves of the Queen of Madagascar, this native has attained honoured place in the island's missionary history. His name is Bernard Rainizanamanga, and while a catechist, he endured considerable suffering during the trouble attending the rising against the Hova in 1896. Later he was ordained deacon and priest, and appointed to mission work in Imerina

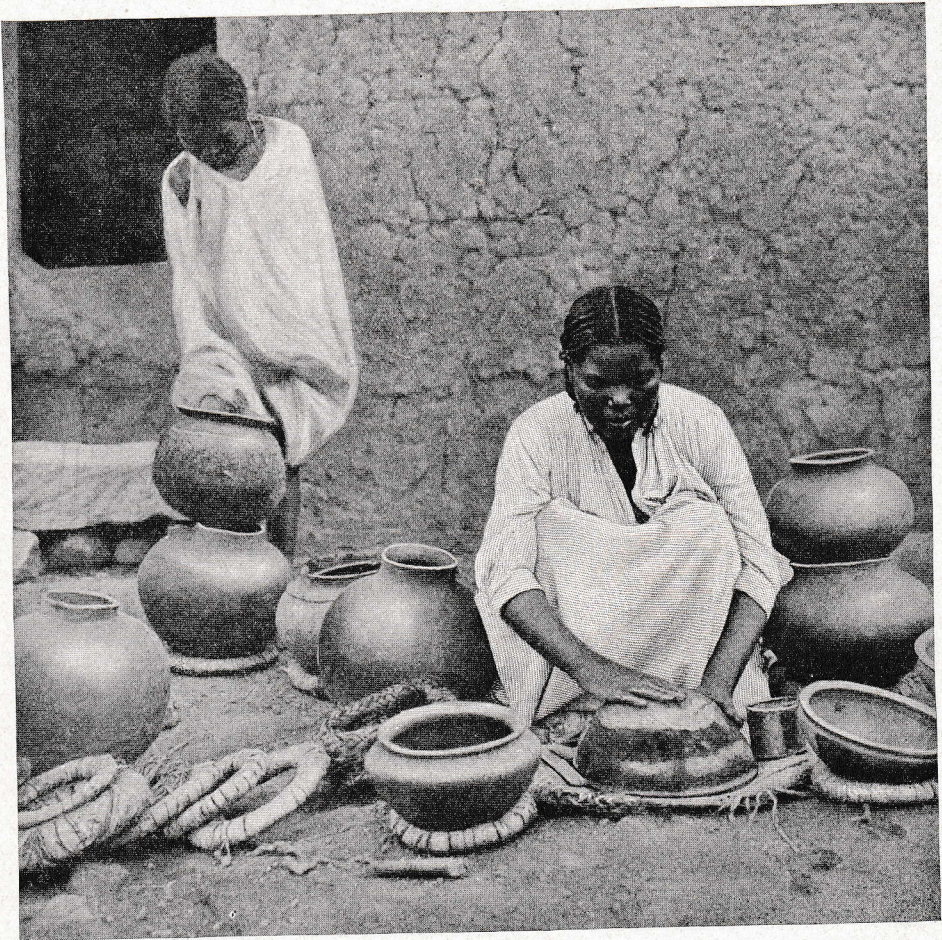
Photo, the Rev. H. H. Blair

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crocodiles, which often attain a great size, and prove a source of real anxiety to the natives. Herds of wild cattle range the grassy plains of the western provinces, probably descendants of once tame Portuguese oxen, and the island is rich in bird life. Many of the Malagasy birds are remarkable for the brilliance of their plumage.

It is now generally agreed that the inhabitants of Madagascar have come from a Malayo-Polynesian stock. There is a tradition among the natives that the first inhabitants of the island were

the Vazimba, and that they retired to a small territory among the Sakalava before the advance of the conquering Hova, but the tradition is vague. The language, strangely enough, among tribes that differ so much in customs and appearance, is one, though various dialects are spoken. The principal tribes are the Antimerina (commonly called the Hova) of the central and eastern regions, the Sakalava of the west, the Betsileo, the Bara, the Mahafaly, the Tanosy and Taimoro of the south central and extreme south. The name Hova really belongs



SHAPING THE CLAY THAT SHALL BE FILLED WITH WATER

Malagasy craftsmanship which, considering the paucity and the rudeness of the native appliances, is of a high order in metal working and weaving, is displayed to less advantage in pottery. This woman is making the *siny* which are found in every household—rather large globular waterpots, well shaped but free of decoration. When full the orifice is covered with a basket lid to exclude dust

Photo, M. Razaka



THREE ZAFIMANIRY GRACES CHALLENGE ADMIRATION

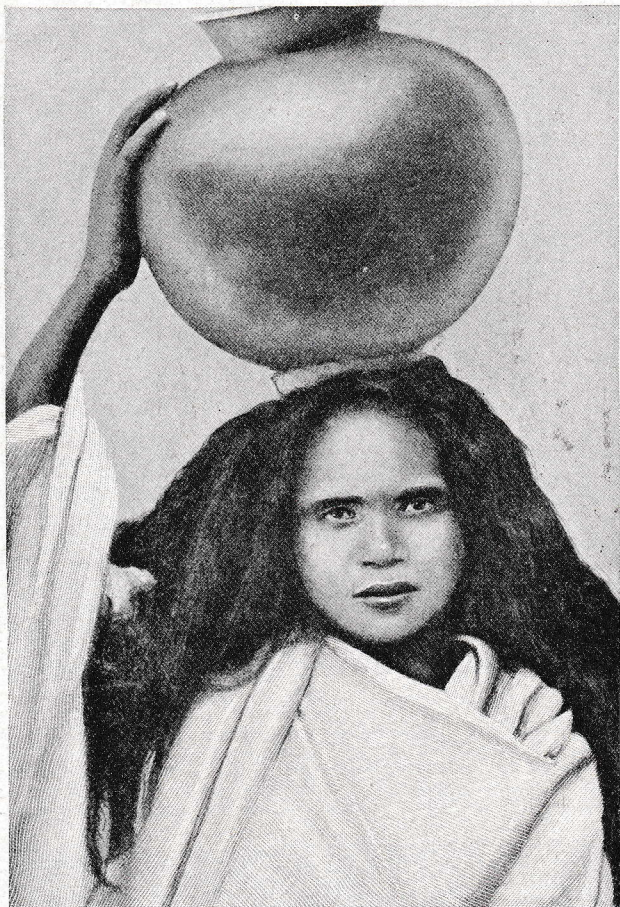
Many of the Malagasy women are decidedly comely, with well-moulded figures and a graceful carriage. Costume does not vary very greatly among the different tribes. These three Zafimaniry girls exhibit the native lamba—an oblong cloth wrapped round the body with one end generally thrown over the shoulder, and the scanty skirt of fibre woven from the leaf of the raphia palm. Each is further embellished with a necklace of which she is quietly proud, and the headdresses add a finishing touch



EARTHEN VESSELS GROWING UNDER BETSILEO POTTERS' THUMBS

Living on the central plateau of Madagascar, south of the Hova, the Betsileo are an important tribe with a strong negroid strain shown in their frizzy hair and dark skin. In the decoration of their houses and tombs and of their household utensils and weapons there is a suggestion of an indigenous art which never seems to have existed among the natives of Imerina

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STRENGTH IN DUSKY TRESSES

Viewed thus from in front the large circular waterpot appears an awkward and, when full, a heavy burden for any woman's head. Her hair flowing loose is the outward token that this Malagasy is a widow

to the second of the three social classes, the other two being Andriana (nobles) and Mainti (slaves). The Hova are fairest in complexion, and are probably more Malayan than the Sakalava. They are certainly the most intelligent and cultured of all the Malagasy tribes, and are also the best agriculturists of the island.

The Sakalava are a darker race with long frizzy hair. They are a proud and independent people, and prefer war and the chase to industry. They may be divided into two tribes, the Masikoro of the western interior and the Vezo who inhabit the coast. The latter are fishermen and sailors, and

accomplished swimmers, who seem as much at home in or on the water as on land.

The Mahafaly, who dwell in the south of the island, are a most intractable race, given to war-like and predatory excursions among their neighbours. The Betsileo are an industrious people, being the smiths of the island. They are skilful workers in iron, and forge spades, knives, and hatchets, which they sell among the other tribes.

The Malagasy have the reputation of being lively but crafty; like many other peoples in the same stage of culture they are imitative but not inventive; they learn with ease to read and write, and they are good speakers, for it was the native custom to debate everything in public, and



BEZANOZANO BEAUTY'S BRAIDS

Bezanozano women plait their hair in fine braids which are coiled in flat disks set low over brow and ears, and encircling the head to the nape of the neck



HOW MALAGASY LADIES GO SWINGING DOWN THE WAYS

Madagascar's distinctive vehicle is the filanjana. The type commonly used by native ladies consists of an oblong framework of light wood filled in with a plaited material formed of strips of sheepskin and attached to poles cut from the midrib of the huge leaves of the raphia palm. It is carried easily by four men who keep step and shift the poles from shoulder to shoulder while trotting and, with the accomplishment of the expert, without disturbing the security of their burden



FASHIONS IN COIFFURE AFFECTED BY HOVA WOMEN

Styles of hair dressing vary considerably among the different Malagasy tribes. These Hova women plait their hair in very fine braids, which are drawn tightly and evenly from a central parting and secured round the nape of the neck. The upper figure on the right displays the coiffure adopted as sign of mourning, the hair being drawn out to full length and set in stiffened dishevelment

Photos, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"



PROUD KING'S DAUGHTERS FROM OVER THE SEA

Something of the quality of character and of the pride of race that enabled their ancestors to secure kingship in Madagascar is revealed in the physique and expression of these Sakalava girls. Melanesian in origin, with an admixture of Arab blood in their veins, they have strikingly aristocratic personality, with which the exceptional richness of their highly-decorative lambas is in true consonance

Photo, L. Nevire



HOW BETSIMISARAKA MOTHERS CARRY THEIR BABIES ABOUT

Formerly a somewhat despised and down-trodden people, the Betsimisaraka of the east coast of Madagascar have a good many redeeming qualities. They respond quickly to civilizing influences, are hospitable, and have considerable family affection. Their general docility keeps their home relations happy. The women are good mothers, not over-punctilious, perhaps, in respect of cleanliness, but fond of their children, whose infancy is happy enough



LEVIATHAN SLAIN PROVIDES LEATHER FOR COMMERCE

Crocodiles abound in the rivers and lakes of Madagascar, and their slaughter and the preparation of their skins for commercial uses is a growing industry in European hands. The natives, however, have a superstitious dread of these monsters, which prevents their attempting to kill them, believing that if a crocodile is killed its fellows will exact a human life in expiation



WILLING LITTLE CHILDREN HELPING MOTHER TO GET DINNER

Rice is the staple food of all the Malagasy tribes, and appears at every meal. Manioc root, potatoes, and other vegetables also form part of the ordinary dietary, with a little meat or fish. Other things eaten as a relish with rice are snails, locusts, certain kinds of caterpillars, moths, and a heterogeneous collection of creatures dredged from shallow water and including shrimps, water-beetles, and insect larvae, so that a certain variety of flavour is ensured to this otherwise rather vapid food



FAR FROM HAPPY RESULTS OF COMPROMISE IN COSTUME

Commerce with foreigners at the ports on the eastern coast of Madagascar has resulted in the Betsimisaraka adopting a mixture of European and native costume, to the great disadvantage of their appearance. These women, whose home is at Betsizaraina, south of Tamatave, wear the Malagasy lamba over ill-cut bodices, with a slatternly effect heightened by their untidily-twisted curls



FEMININE DIGNITY ENHANCED BY GRACEFUL DRAPERY

Wholly admirable in contrast to that of the hybrid costume worn by the Betsimisaraka women shown above is the effect of the purely native costume worn by these Sakalava girls of the western coast. Drapery could not be better arranged than the lamba upon the fine second figure from the left, and the perfect simplicity of the entire costume is a triumph of seemly art. It will be noticed that each has arranged her costume with tasteful difference, contrasting brown skin with colourful cloth

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WOMAN'S DAILY TASK IN MADAGASCAR

Every Malagasy housewife has her laona, wooden mortar, in which she pounds rice with her fanoto, a long, rounded wooden pestle, and her sahafa, a shallow wooden dish in which she winnows the rice from the husk

each man had a right to express his opinion.

The Malagasy woman has a keen sense of her dignity, for it is unusual to find that subjection of woman which is characteristic of so many European lands: this is the more noteworthy,

as there is in the island an Arab population that must have immigrated at an early date, for they know the patriarchs but not the Prophet.

In old times the towns and villages of Imerina were normally built on the tops of hills for safety, with three or four deep ditches as defences; the entrance was by one or more gateways formed of slabs of stone, and in place of a gate a huge circular stone, eight or ten feet in diameter, might be swung before the mouth and wedged with other stones behind.

In other parts of the central area a dense and wide plantation of prickly pear or of tsiafakomby, a shrub with hook thorns, impassable by cattle, formed the defence. A more modern form of defence was the cactus hedge, and some of the southern villages have a plantation scores of yards thick that kept out not only their native enemies but even the French melinite shells during the conquest of the island.

At the present day the European house has, for the well-to-do, taken the place of the old type of dwelling. Formerly each tribe seems to have had its own well-marked

type of hut, the style of which depended partly on the climate, partly on the materials available for its construction. In the centre of the island, where the elevation makes low temperatures frequent, the clayey soil provided a suitable material for mud



MALAGASY HARVESTERS REAPING RICE IN IMERINA

In cutting the rice the Malagasy use a straight-bladed knife, and, as the work proceeds, lay the stalks in long, curving, narrow lines along the field, the heads of one sheaf being covered over by the cut ends of the stalks of the next sheaf. This is done to prevent the ears drying too quickly and the grain falling out before it reaches the threshing floor



LIGHT REFRESHMENTS FOR CASUAL WAYFARERS

Besides the regular weekly markets held in the towns all over the central province, wayside markets are met with in every part of Imerina. Sometimes they comprise a number of umbrella-shaded stalls stocked with a large variety of goods. Sometimes they are represented by a little company of natives squatted on the ground behind bowls of cooked rice, manioc, and other simple provisions

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MALAGASY MUSIC IN MOURNFUL MINOR KEY

By rubbing the string with the stick a feeble, grating sound ensues from the gourd resonator held against the player's chest. The minstrel's wife sits indifferently beside him as he scrapes monotonously away

houses with thick walls; these were remarkable for extraordinarily high-pitched roofs, and were almost invariably placed with their length running north and south. Another type was made of timber framing filled in with planks; the roofs were "tiled" with wood, and a curious feature was the projection of two long poles at each end of the ridge pole, their length being proportional to the rank of the owner. Wood being extremely scarce on the central plateau, a house of this type was the privilege of the man of rank, with troops of slaves to carry the necessary wood from the distant forests; the poor man's house, however, was better adapted to the climate, for it

was warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

In the west, among the Sakalava, where the temperature is more equable and the soil sandy, a slight framework of wood filled in with palm leaves or the like satisfies the needs of this somewhat lazy tribe. In the hot eastern area, with its heavy rainfall, there is no lack of building material; but the ravenala, or traveller's tree provides the Betsimisaraka and other tribes with materials for their dwellings.

Although the ancestors of the Malagasy all came over the Indian Ocean from far distant lands, their descendants do not all show themselves skilful seamen, for they have in some parts not risen above a rude raft as a means of traversing rivers; the zahitra consists of thirty or forty pieces of bamboo, each ten or twelve feet long, roughly lashed together with a

creeper, and so cranky that it is half submerged when two or three men and their loads are aboard; a split bamboo serves as a paddle, and only four trips an hour are possible across a river a hundred yards wide. The south-eastern peoples, on the other hand, have boats built of planks tied together which are thirty feet long and eight feet broad, with a complement of fifty men; there are no ribs, but the seat-boards come through the sides and stiffen it.

A more ordinary type of canoe is the dug-out, thirty or forty feet long and only four feet broad, with no keel to give stability; but it travels at some speed under the impulse of paddles shaped like wooden shovels. On the north-west

THRO' MADAGASCAR

With Its Tropic Tribes



Twisting, matting, coiling, plaiting, the Malagasy coiffeuse employs no small skill and exhausts no little patience in her deft artistry



Rice culture occupies much of the time of the Malagasy of both sexes. The work of transplanting the young plants from the Kètsa plots into the soft mud of the rice-fields is always done by the women

Photo, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"



Ploughs are strange novelties in Madagascar. To dig up their rice-fields the bare-footed natives use long and narrow-bladed spades which are driven into the ground by the weight of the handle

Photo, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"



Of fiery temperament, and given to fighting and cattle-lifting are these men of the Bara, one of the most primitive races in Madagascar



An offshoot of the Malayo-Polynesian group, Malagasy fisherfolk inherit a love of the sea and skill in all that pertains to their trade

Photo, M. Razaka



In the island of Madagascar there are few natives who have not come under European influence, but fashions still retain an effective originality, even among these sober-minded members of a Christian congregation

Photo. Archdeacon E. O. McMahon



The dances of the Hova, or "people of Imerina" as their real tribal name implies, are not devoid of grace, for with the gift of imitation that is strong in them is combined a keen sense of rhythmic movement



Multifarious trinkets are befitting to her position as wife of a chief of Mayotte, the centre of French influence in the Comoro Islands



This haughty personage is ex-Sultan of Grand Comoro, one of the islands lying like stepping-stones between Madagascar and Africa



These merry brown girls who sing and clap their hands among the leafy luxuriance of the forest playgrounds belong to one of the many tribal divisions of the Tanala scattered over the wooded regions of Madagascar



Once dominant in Madagascar, the Sakalava, living on the western side of the island, are a proud and warlike people, who were unsubdued by the Hova and offered stubborn resistance to the French conquest



A docile, contented tribe are the Betsimisaraka, whose women, despite their dark skin and negroid features, are of a most engaging appearance

Photo, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"



The lengthy bamboo valiha, with its fibre strings and calabash bridges, can best produce the plaintive airs that touch the Malagasy heart



The dances of the Tanala, the "forest dwellers" of Madagascar, are composed of a succession of fantastic and agile movements



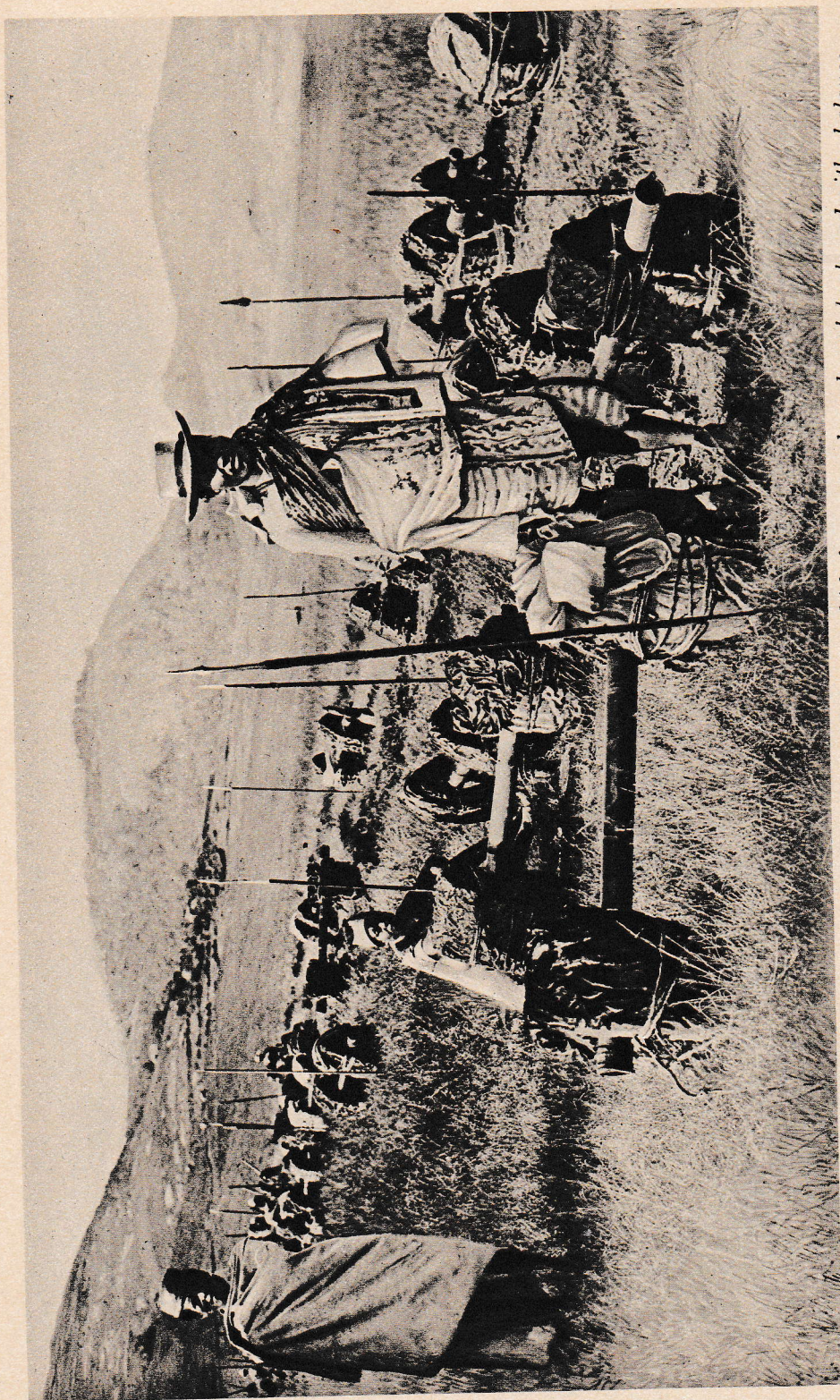
These dances are performed usually by two men or two women. Sometimes they are mere displays of suppleness, poise, and strength



More commonly the dances are realistically pantomimic, illustrating emotion, such as love, joy, fear, or action, such as combat or the chase



Every muscle being brought into play by this popular pastime, it is not surprising that the Tanala are a sinewy and able-bodied people



A rest by the roadside comes not at all amiss to these Malagasy hide-bearers, whose broad backs adroitly balance tightly-bound burdens of weighty ox-skins for many long miles in the rugged regions of Madagascar

Photo. the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"

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coast alone are outriggers found, and the Sakalava make long fishing trips in these under sail.

The Malagasy are very superstitious, and have constant recourse to the diviner and sorcerer. Before any undertaking of importance is begun, consultation is held with a diviner, who reads the fates by working what is called "sikidy vintana." This divination is effected by arranging beans or seeds on a mat in different numbers and geometrical formations, and after a considerable amount of complicated mumbo-jumbo, the seer declares the moment either lucky or unlucky for the enterprise. The sorcerer or medicine-man is a most important person in a Malagasy village. His frequent lack of success as a healer seems to have no depreciatory effect on the esteem in which he is held.

Marriage customs differ very considerably among the various tribes. Among the Betsimisaraka even the most distant relatives may not marry; if tenth cousins even were to do so, there would be a great scandal. Among the Zafisoro the genealogies of the parties are examined in case of doubt, and a marriage already celebrated may be dissolved if it is against the customary law. On the other hand, among the Antimerina the king married his sister, perhaps to keep hasina (holiness) in the family.

Hova parents choose the bride for their son, while among the Sakalava and Taimoro the young man chooses his wife himself and wins her more in the

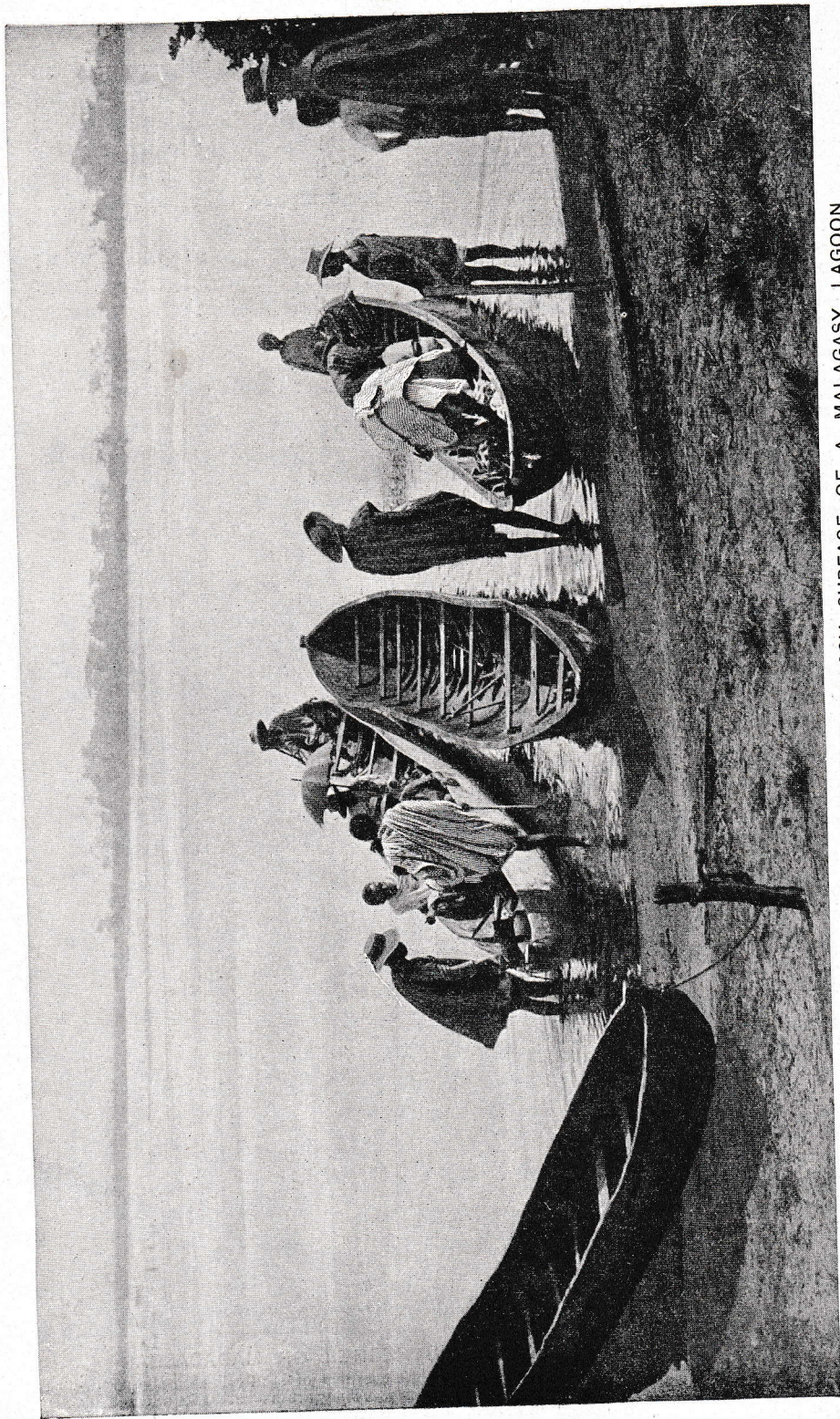
European fashion. Divorce is an extremely simple affair among the greater number of the Malagasy tribes; the husband has merely to acquaint his wife with the fact that he no longer needs her companionship, and the affair is settled.

As with marriage so with burial; different tribes follow different customs. Some bury their dead in solitary places, others in the very midst of their villages; some inter the corpse immediately after death, others wait until



STURDY SOUTHERNER OF MADAGASCAR

The Antanosy tribe inhabit a strip of land lying on the south-eastern coast of the island. They are as yet little affected by foreign influence, but Lutherans from America are making steadfast efforts to secure a hold in the region



LAUNCHING CANOES FOR A TRIP OVER THE GLASSY SURFACE OF A MALAGASY LAGOON

Malagasy canoes are usually somewhat rude contrivances hollowed out of a single tree. They vary from ten to forty feet in length, and are about four feet in breadth and depth. Being keelless they are apt to capsize unless carefully loaded and handled, but they can be propelled with ease at considerable speed with the shovel-shaped paddles held vertically and dug into the water. The native canoeemen usually paddle to musical and often amusing chants, one man improvising a recitative and the rest chiming in with a chorus at regular intervals.



HERE LIES ONE WHO IN HIS LIFE WAS HONOURED OF THE BETSILEO PEOPLE

Funerals are expensive affairs for Malagasy mourners. The ceremonies include a banquet for which bullocks are slaughtered in numbers proportioned to the rank of the deceased or the ambitious ostentation of the relatives. As many as three hundred bullocks have been slaughtered for a single such occasion. Afterwards the skulls and horns are placed on or near the tomb as a memorial. The Betsileo tribe erect large stone monuments, about twenty-five feet square and five feet high, the actual tomb being a deep subterranean chamber approached by a passage opening out about a hundred feet away

Photo, the Rev. George Shaw



EMBLEMS OF POWER IN THE HEART OF A HEATHEN VILLAGE

Two or three tree-trunks fixed in the ground are found in every village of the Sihanaka. The top of these resembles a pair of horns, as in each case the forked branches are sharpened to a fine point. On certain occasions bullock horns are fastened to these trunks, for as among many Eastern peoples, so in Madagascar, the horn is a symbol of power and protection



STONE SYMBOLISM OF PRIMITIVE MALAGASY BELIEF

Being mixed races the natives of Madagascar have very mixed religious ideas. The reverential awe with which the heathen Malagasy regards certain places is due chiefly to superstition fostered by his beliefs; but the real renown of these numerous sacred spots—such as a heap of stones, or Fanataovana, a pool of water, tree, or hilltop—depends largely upon the medicine man who advertises them

Photo, M. Razaka

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it is very much decomposed. Nearly all Malagasy tribes bury their dead, if possible, in their own country, and a body is often carried considerable distances to ensure this result. This is especially the case with the Antimerina; it is quite common during the dry season to meet groups of people carrying home the remains of relatives, which are fastened to long poles for carriage, and at night are leant up against the wall of the house that serves as a lodging for the living.

Again, most tribes are obsessed with the idea of contamination in connexion with a corpse, from which pollution it is necessary to be purified in various ways. The lolo, or spirit of the departed, is supposed to haunt the sepulchre, and these places are held in great dread. Funerals, however, are almost invariably the occasion for feasting, sacrifices of oxen, and wild orgies of drinking. Memorials are often raised to the memory

of the dead, and are either of stone or wood. The Sakalava burial ground is frequently fenced in with bullocks' horns and the enclosure adorned with carved posts. The deceased's treasure is generally buried with him, but woe betide the desecrator of the graves. The Hova and other tribes bury their dead in vaults or subterranean caves.

The Betsimisaraka of the coast are accustomed to place their dead in rude dug-out coffins with a roof-shaped lid—perhaps a kind of canoe burial, often found among peoples who have migrated



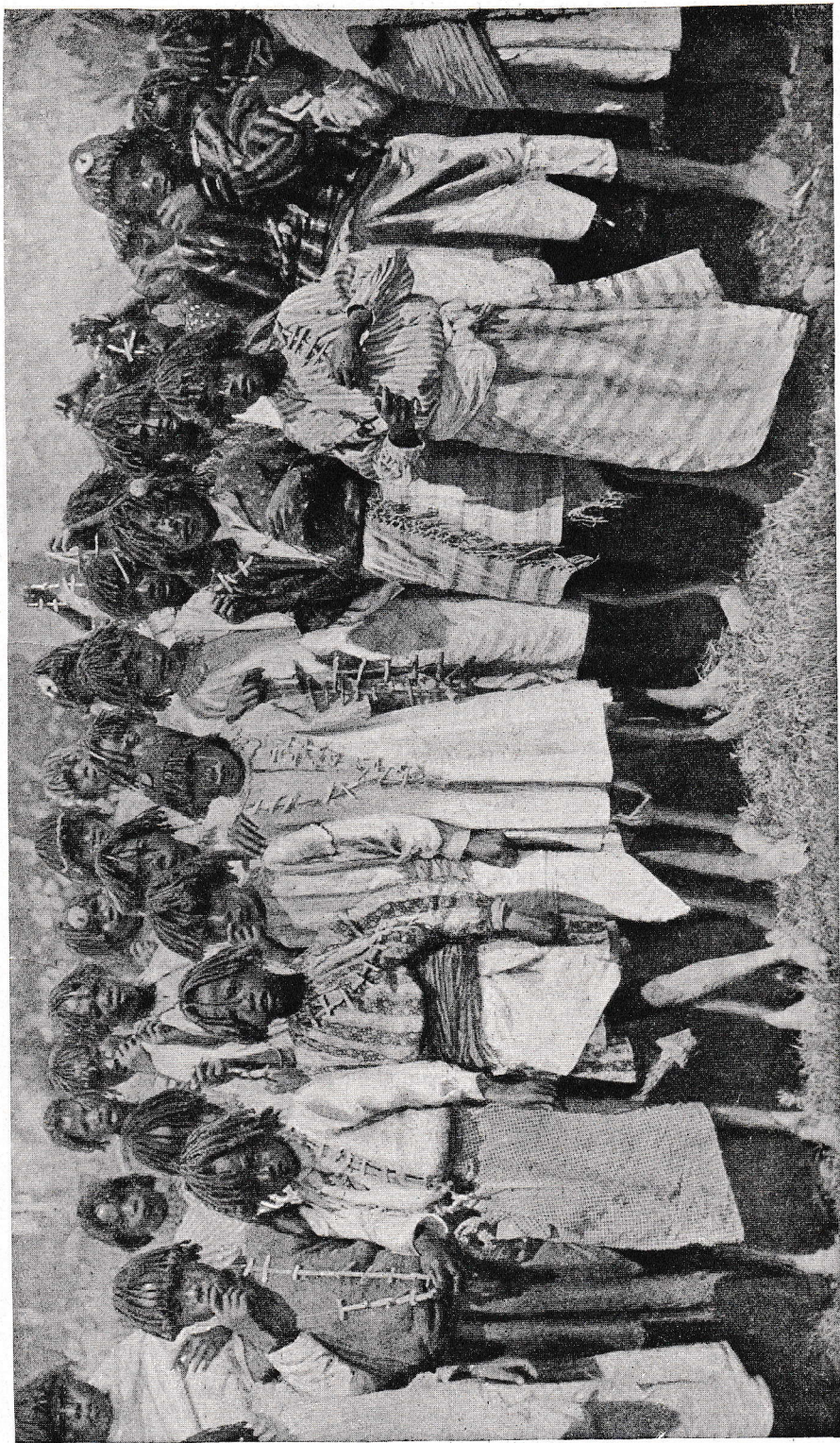
INDIAN INFLUENCE ON MALAGASY DRESS

This personable young woman belongs to the Antankarana tribe settled in north-west Madagascar. Both Arabs and Indians have long been established in this region, and their influence on dress and ornament is apparent in this gala costume

Photo, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"

from their original home. It is not the custom to bury them; they are laid on the ground if poor people, or on a kind of trestle if rich, and are protected by trees or a kind of roof.

Among the Betsileo certain snakes were treated as members of the family and regarded as reincarnations of the spirits of the dead. When a man died the corpse was attached to the central pillar of the house and allowed to putrefy; some of the liquid was received in a pot, and the largest worm that developed in it was regarded as the fanany; the pot was shut up in the



CHILDREN OF THE SAKALAVA; ERSTWHILE RULING RACE OF MADAGASCAR AND THE ORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY
 The western side of Madagascar is inhabited by some twenty-five tribes grouped together as the Sakalava. Before the nineteenth century they were the dominant race in Madagascar, and even now differ both in physique and character from the other Malagasy. Missionary work has made little headway among them, the war-like spirit inherited from their Arab ancestors remains untamed, and a strong suspicion of Europeans prevents any great progress being made in their midst. The hair of the Sakalava is their chief pride; many varieties of hairdressing are in vogue, but platts would appear to be the prevailing fashion.

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family tomb, and a long piece of bamboo kept the tomb in communication with the surface. Some months later the worm was believed to come out in the shape of a small python. When a serpent of this species is seen in a village, food is offered to it and a lamba (cloth) of silk, and the acceptance of the offering is a sign that it is the relative of those who make it. Sometimes the python is kept in an enclosure, sometimes in the tomb; it may also be set at liberty.

Malagasy religion is largely a cult of ancestors; true, they have a supreme god, Zanahary, creator of all things, but he is remote from the affairs of men and regarded as incapable of doing evil; hence worship of him is superfluous, for it would not profit the worshipper. An essential part of their religion is fady, which corresponds roughly to what is known in Polynesia as taboo, and has something in common with European ideas of sanctity as well as impurity. It covers an immense range. There is fady attaching to the abnormal, the new and the foreign, to sick and dead, to chiefs, clans and castes, to men and to women, to the new-born infant, and to the members of a family in their relations with each other, to places, times, seasons, and cardinal points, to plants and animals.

Tyranny of Fady in Daily Life

In one tribe no one may drink at a spring without planting in the ground a knotted piece of straw, probably to propitiate the Vazimba, who are deemed to be the protectors of tombs, springs, and rivers. The Betsileo thought it fady to call by name anyone who was on the way to draw water, for that person would surely die; but if the name had to be mentioned, a curse must be uttered also, to avert the ill-luck. It is fady to eat standing up or lying down, or with the hat on the head; the big rice spoon must not be placed crossways on the pot, nor must anyone be struck with it; food must not be thrown from one to

another, the lamba (cloth) must not cover the hands at a meal, marrow may not be extracted from a bone, and so on. Fady is very prominent in mourning rites; no one may carry a sunshade, nor whistle, nor make pots; it was equally fady to laugh loud, to clap the hands, to comb the hair, to wear a hat, to look in a mirror, to clean the teeth, or to stand with arms akimbo when an Antimerina chief was dead.

The Staff of Life in Madagascar

The main food of the Malagasy is rice, but there is a town in Imerina whose people may never eat rice. Sihanaka women may eat rice as a rule, but must not touch it on a certain day. Some unfortunate people, on the other hand, are not permitted to cultivate any vegetable except rice; some Sihanaka families taboo tobacco; some may chew but not smoke, others smoke but not chew; the varieties are endless.

Rice is the staple food, but the Malagasy does not despise any fish that come to his net; locusts, moths, caterpillars, spiders, tadpoles, water-beetles, all help to give a relish to the rice, but these and even meat are only laoka (accessories). Rice cultivation thus takes much time; first the digging, then the broadcast sowing in ketsa plots, then the planting out, then the replanting in the soft mud, the irrigation, the weeding, and, finally, the harvest; such is the programme of the tribes that cultivate the ground on the central plateau.

Malagasy and Their Cattle

In the east, on the other hand, rice culture is far less laborious, for irrigation is not needed, and the seed is simply sown on the hillside when the bush has been fired. In the west and south, rice is all but unknown, for the tribes are too lazy to give it any attention. Maize, cassava, the sweet potato, and a wild plant called tavolo are their staple sustenance; but it must not be forgotten that these tribes are also



SONS OF THE MARSHES OF NORTH-EAST MADAGASCAR

"Lake-dwellers" is the meaning of the name Sihanaka borne by the tribe living in the marshy plain which includes the fine Lake Alaotra, north by west of Tamatave. The men, and women too, plait their hair in a number of little ropes ending in a knot and hanging loosely all round the head. They are a quiet, inoffensive people, a little too much addicted to rum

Photo, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"

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pastoral. Large herds of humped cattle exist all over the island, some of them magnificent animals, and it is only the poorest families that do not possess a few heads.

A favourite occupation of the people is to follow their herds and camp out in the pastures with their wives and children. Yet, oddly enough, very few milk their cattle, most of



SAKALAVA GIRL GAUDILY DIGHT

Forsaking her native costume, which would better become her, she deems herself at the height of graceful achievement in what, elsewhere, might pass as a tablecloth



TAIMORO DAME IN PLAIN ATTIRE

Though she might covet her Antanosy neighbour's wardrobe, this Taimoro woman, clad only in the native kitamby topped by a cotton jacket, is very pleasing to the eye

Photo, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"

them preferring a broth made from fish to milk. Fish, especially eels, caught by the men, and small fish, called toho, and shrimps netted by the women also enter largely into the dietary of these tribes.



DULCET TONES OF THE VALIHA

The valiha is a four-foot length of bamboo, thin strips of the outer fibre of which are detached and strung over bridges of pumpkin-shell and plucked with the fingers



ANTANOSY LADY OF FASHION

Elaborately coiffured, with necklaces festooning her tastefully-draped, flowered gown, this Antanosy woman would figure well in the drawing-rooms of any European capital

Photos, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"

With regard to commerce generally, Madagascar holds out considerable promise if the difficult question of labour can be satisfactorily solved. In the low-lying portions of the east coast, sugar, cotton, coffee, vanilla, and rice thrive; while on the west, raphia, hides, beans, rubber, and tortoiseshell form the principal exports. Ostrich farming has of late made some progress in the Tulear district, and as the climate is suitable a bright future is possible for this industry.

Gold, copper, iron, lead, and graphite have all been found on the island, and asphalt seepages freely occur in the Menabe province. Precious stones have been discovered in the central uplands.

The principal obstacle to Madagascar's development is the lack of ways and means of communication. In all parts of the island these are deplorably bad, but western Madagascar has been most neglected in this respect. Here, in some parts, roads are altogether non-existent, and the only possible means of conveyance over native tracks is the filanjana, a species of hammock swung between two poles and borne on

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the shoulders of native carriers. The island boasts very few good harbours, and the mouths of the rivers are difficult of access owing to coral reefs or the dangerous shoals with which they abound. Cargoes are either shipped or discharged by a flotilla of lighters and canoes, which can, owing to light draught, negotiate the shallow estuaries. Adopting a conciliatory policy towards

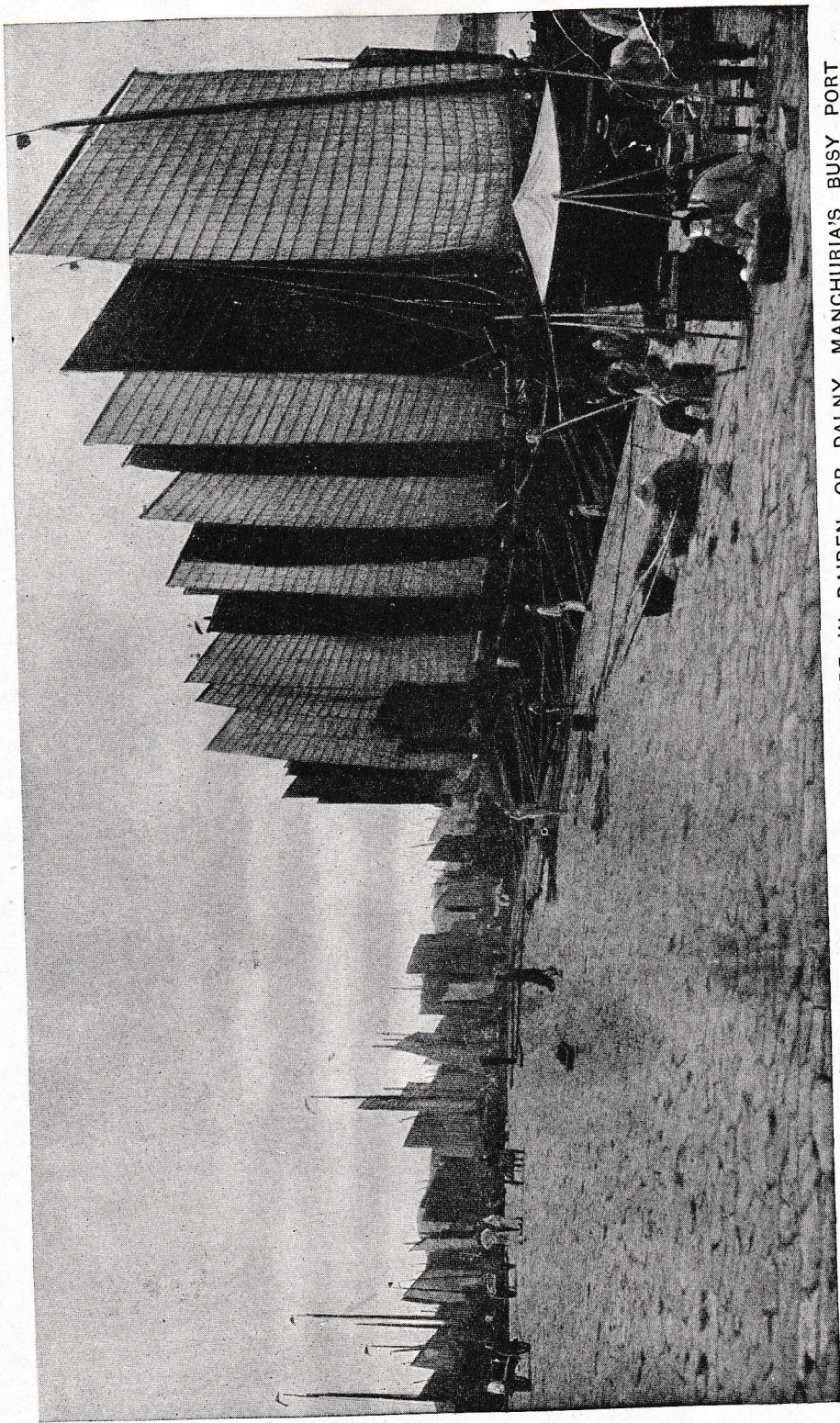
the natives, the French, despite those difficulties associated with the administration of coloured races, have done extremely well by their distant colony. With all its drawbacks (fever being a very serious one), the island of Madagascar will, with the attention of medical science and a wise commercial policy, prove one of the finest gems in the crown of France's colonial possessions.



ARMED CHILDREN OF THE OLD SOUTH-EASTERN FORESTS

Tanala, or forest-dwellers, is the generic name given to a number of tribes living in the wooded regions of south-east Madagascar. The men are exceedingly expert spearmen, and usually carry shields made of circular pieces of tough wood, about eighteen inches in diameter, covered with undressed bullock-hide. A handle is cut out of the solid wood at the back

Photo, the Rev. James Sibree, "A Naturalist in Madagascar"



MATting SAILS OF CROWDED CRAFT AT THE JUNK WHARF IN DAIREN, OR DALNY, MANCHURIA'S BUSY PORT
These clumsy-seeming junks that sail the China seas give little idea of their real sea-worthiness from the crowded disorder of their decks when in port. Their name is derived through the Portuguese junco, from the Javanese djong, a ship, and in build they are characterised by their flat bottoms, high sterns, and square bows, while they are rigged with lug sails often made, as can be seen from the photograph, of matting. Dairen is twenty miles north-east of Port Arthur

Photo, South Manchuria Railway Co.